

# From child martyr to child executioner: further confirmation of the horrific origins of the Basij

By Robert Harris

Last week a timely report of the truly sickening origins of the Basij paramilitary force was [published at The Iconoclast](#). The Jerusalem Post was one of many MSM publications that has ignored or whitewashed this deplorable truth despite it having been reported upon in prior decades.

Nevertheless, the Jerusalem Post has since featured an article that attests to the widespread manipulation and indoctrination of children within Revolutionary Iran during the Iran-Iraq war toward the goal of recruiting them as martyrs for the war effort, with the [following article](#) “Former IRGC child executioner tells ‘Post’ how he became devout Christian dissident”, by Danielle Greyman-Kennard April 4th, 2026.

The narrative introduces Mr. Afshin Javid, a dissident, who provides valuable insight into the abuses and mental turmoil that these martyrs would have inevitably endured. The article describes how Javid’s father, and allie who defied the former regime, subsequently got his son released but Javid would go on to join an execution squad where children were induced to execute individuals under an Islamic pretext – within the Basij itself, where he first executed a Christian man at the mere age of 14.

An extract of the article is reproduced below:

“The civilian cost of the war against the Islamic regime is a tragic but necessary sacrifice that the large majority of Iranians are willing to endure so their children may one day live in freedom. That’s the assessment of Afshin Javid, a former member of the Basij paramilitary force’s execution squad, who later became a devout Christian.

“Iranian people feel they are condemned to three types of deaths,” he said in an interview with The Jerusalem Post on Monday. The options, he said, were to be killed by the regime; experience a death of the soul by watching Tehran brutalize, rape, and murder their loved ones; or be killed in US or Israeli strikes. The choice for Iranians is simple, he noted, as the airstrikes carry with them hope of regime change and a different future. [...]

THE VALUE OF life was not always something understood by Javid. When he was eight, his home in Abadan, Iran, was bombed, and his journey to Islamism began. Told by his grandfather that the West had destroyed everything he owned because he was a Muslim, Javid committed himself entirely to Islam and the Islamic regime’s doctrine of martyrdom.

“We had been completely desensitized to the value of life itself. Life for them [Islamists] doesn’t mean much... What is actually glorified is death, especially for a cause for jihad, for a holy war, to be a martyr,” he said as he explained the mentality among the regime’s supporters and how hard it is for those with a Western mindset to understand this.

“I wanted to be a good Muslim,” Javid shared, recounting how he heard stories from his childhood martyrdom was the way to “serve Allah,” particularly after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

After watching videos of children on TV clearing minefields in Iraq, and hearing the religious praise pushed on those killed in the line of duty, Javid forged his parents’ signatures to enlist in the Iranian military at age 14. Carrying a cheap metal key, which the minors were told was a “key to paradise,” and a small Koran, Javid was briefly deployed before his father demanded that authorities return him, furious he had been allowed to be sent to die without parental consent.

Thousands of children were sent to die on the border, and many families were groomed to sacrifice their children by both

religious doctrine and the financial benefits offered to those standing behind Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The regime recruited children as young as nine to sweep the minefields, recruiting them from slums and providing families with Bunyade Shaheed (Martyrs' Foundation) payments when their children were killed or maimed, according to the UN Refugee Agency.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that at least 10% of Iranian prisoners taken during the Iran-Iraq War were under 18, though the official number of child soldiers deployed remains unknown.

"We saw on TV how children are becoming soldiers. They're walking on landmines; children were volunteering to fight and everything, teenagers as early as 13 to 14," he recounted. "It was all the time, 24/7, on TV. I thought, 'I don't know if Allah is pleased with me. I want to do more. I want to do more.'

"I thought, [this is] the only way I know to serve Allah, and he would be pleased with me. Looking back, you realize you have been brainwashed, but at that time, according to the teachings of Islam, it is to be a martyr. So if you are a martyr, then you immediately go to heaven, and you can even vouch for family members to come to heaven," he explained.

RECALLED FROM the border, Javid began volunteering at a local mosque and joined the Basij paramilitary force, a voluntary militia that worked under the IRGC. He would spend his days ensuring the neighborhood was compliant with the country's new Islamic foundations, checking whether women were fully covering their bodies, and not listening to music. His dedication and the reputation he developed as a true believer led him to be recruited to the militia's execution team in the "Sabi l'aw'allah" ("In the cause of Allah").

The first execution he saw was more brutal than those that are described in Western accounts, he said. The victim was lifted

by the neck with a rope, ensuring that they suffocated rather than have the quick death that often results from the broken neck of a drop-hanging.

“As I watched, I felt like something died in me, rather than the person dying. And reality is that the value of life completely dissipated for me,” Javid said. “I remember asking myself, at age 14, ‘Is Allah pleased now with me because I killed somebody? I was part of the team that killed somebody, and they told us he’s an infidel. Now what?’

“I didn’t have some sort of affirmation, confirmation that Allah is pleased with me. And then I thought to myself – and this is a buildup on all the things that you are fed through the media, the school system, everything – that you need to find joy when you’re doing Allah’s will; if you’re killing the infidel, you need to be joyful. There needs to be a celebration.” [...]

The story stands as a testament to the repugnant manipulation of the children of the Revolutionary Iran. The rest of Javid’s fascinating story is found at the link cited above.